United Nations CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/3

Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Distr.: General
21 February 2018

Original: English

Working Group on Firearms
Vienna, 2 and 3 May 2018
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Practical measures under the Firearms Protocol that contribute to preventing criminal organizations and terrorist groups from acquiring weapons through illicit trafficking, and to monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals

Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote ratification and implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

Background paper prepared by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 8/3, entitled "Strengthening the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime", the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime requested the Secretariat to inform the Working Group on Firearms about (a) the activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to assist the Conference in promoting and supporting the implementation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, (b) coordination with other relevant international and regional organizations, (c) best practices in the areas of training and capacity-building, and (d) awareness-raising strategies to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition.

2. In the same resolution, the Conference noted with appreciation the assistance provided by UNODC to States, upon request, through its Global Programme on Firearms, and requested that it continue to assist requesting States in their efforts to ratify, accept, approve of or accede to and implement the Firearms Protocol.

* CTOC/COP/WG.6/2018/1.

V.18-00932 (E) 020318 050318

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3. The present background paper was prepared by the Secretariat to inform the Working Group on Firearms about the activities of UNODC to promote and support the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol, pursuant to relevant mandates provided by the Conference and the Working Group. The paper covers the period between the last Working Group meeting, held from 8 to 10 May 2017, and the end of April 2018.

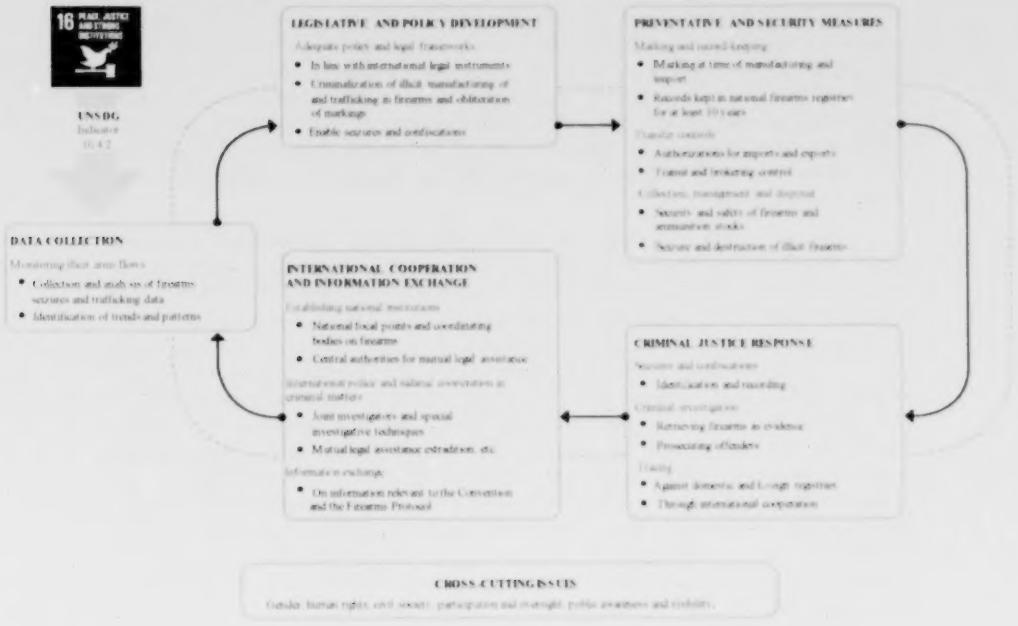
II. Integrated approach of the Global Programme on Firearms to prevent and combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms

4. The work of UNODC to counter illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms under the Global Programme on Firearms follows an integrated approach that is based on five major pillars. Each pillar specifically covers one of five interrelated areas of action needed to address the different aspects of the problem, as follows: (a) enhancing policy and normative development through awareness-raising, legislative assistance and specialized tools to support ratification and implementation of the Protocol; (b) provision of technical support for the implementation of preventive and security measures to prevent the illicit manufacturing and theft of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; (c) strengthening criminal justice responses to detect, investigate and prosecute the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition; (d) fostering and promoting international cooperation and information exchange to address the transnational dimension of trafficking in illicit firearms and related issues; (e) mapping and monitoring flows of illicit firearms by means of global data collection and analysis to enhance the intelligence picture of trafficking in firearms and its criminal context.

5. The Programme's integrated approach builds on the premise that only the joint interaction of all five pillars can provide a meaningful framework for successful action. The approach is complemented by a number of cross-cutting elements, such as awareness-raising and visibility, gender, human rights and civil society participation and oversight, which are integrated into the Programme's activities.

6. Together, the five pillars also contribute to and support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular its Goal 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) and Goal 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), and support the global monitoring of its target 16.4 (by 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime).

Figure I
Integrated five-pillar approach of the Global Programme on Firearms


UNSDG
Indicator
16.4.2
LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT
In line with international legal instruments
Criminalization of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms and obliteration of markings
Enable seizures and confiscations
PREVENTATIVE AND SECURITY MEASURES
Marking at time of manufacturing and import
Records kept in national firearms registries for at least 10 years
Authorizations for imports and exports
Transit and brokering control
Security and safety of firearms and ammunition stocks
Seizure and destruction of illicit firearms
DATA COLLECTION
Collection and analysis of firearms seizures and trafficking data
Identification of trends and patterns
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE
National focal points and coordinating bodies on firearms
Central authorities for mutual legal assistance
Joint investigations and special investigative techniques
Mutual legal assistance extradition, etc.
On information relevant to the Convention and the Firearms Protocol
CRIMINAL JUSTICE RESPONSE
Identification and recording
Retrieving firearms as evidence
Prosecuting offenders
Against domestic and foreign registries
Through international cooperation
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

III. Activities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to promote the ratification and implementation of the Firearms Protocol

7. Pursuant to its mandate, the Global Programme on Firearms has continued to promote and support adherence to and transposition and implementation of the Firearms Protocol. It has also delivered technical assistance, promoted international cooperation and the exchange of good practices and information among practitioners, and enhanced national and international data collection, research and analysis on firearms and illicit trafficking in firearms.

8. Through donor support,[1] the Global Programme on Firearms was able to implement over 50 activities during the reporting period, including by engaging with more than 10 countries in Africa, the Western Balkan region and Latin America in the provision of direct technical support and cooperation, and supported over 45 countries through regional activities, reaching a total of more than 500 people.

A. Normative and policy development: support to intergovernmental bodies and processes related to firearms

1. Participation in and support to the work of intergovernmental bodies

9. Pursuant to Conference resolution 8/3, UNODC has strongly encouraged the participation of national experts and competent authorities in the meetings of the Working Group on Firearms. Moreover, through donor contributions, UNODC was

[1] During the reporting period, activities of the Global Programme on Firearms were funded through donations from the European Union, Germany, Italy and Sweden, as well as from Denmark and Japan (through the UNODC Sahel Programme) and Panama (through its national project).

able to support the participation of practitioners from 10 francophone countries of Africa at the last meeting of the Working Group.[2]

10. Pursuant to the recommendations made by the Working Group at its meeting held in Vienna from 8 to 10 May 2017 (see CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/4), UNODC participated in and contributed to the work of other intergovernmental bodies and mechanisms with a view to maintaining and enhancing cooperation and coordination between the secretariats and bodies of relevant international and regional instruments and mechanisms (recommendation 23) and to facilitating synergies between the Firearms Protocol and other global and regional instruments (recommendation 6), as detailed below.

11. At the invitation of the Mexican chairmanship of the Organization of American States (OAS), representatives of UNODC participated in the forty-seventh regular session of OAS General Assembly, held in Cancun, Mexico, from 19 to 21 June 2017, and contributed to the high-level discussions on multidimensional security. At the invitation of the Chair of the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, held in Geneva from 11 to 15 September 2017, a representative of UNODC also participated as a panellist in the discussions on the Arms Trade Treaty and the Sustainable Development Goals, and held bilateral meetings with the Chair of the Conference and the Secretary of the Arms Trade Treaty, with a view to exploring and fostering cooperation between UNODC and the secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty. Moreover, representatives of UNODC attended the seventy-second session of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (General Assembly First Committee), held in New York from 2 October to 2 November 2017, and the first session of the General Assembly of the African Police Cooperation Organization, held in Algiers from 14 to 16 May 2017.

12. Furthermore, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in and contributed to the preparatory process for the Third Review Conference on the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument through a series of thematic symposiums organized jointly by the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the European Union and the Small Arms Survey. The expert symposiums were aimed at fostering discussion and exchange among experts on several substantive topics, including tracing and stockpile management in conflict and post-conflict situations (held in New York on 23 and 24 October 2017); the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including Sustainable Development Goal 16 and the gender aspects of control of small arms and light weapons (held in New York on 25 and 26 October 2017); manufacturing, technology and design of small arms and light weapons and resulting challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument (held in Brussels on 20 and 21 November 2017); and synergies between the Programme of Action on Small Arms and other instruments, including the Firearms Protocol (held in Geneva from 22 to 24 November 2017).

2. Activities to increase knowledge and raise awareness

13. UNODC has continued to promote greater awareness and understanding of the Firearms Protocol and to increase the visibility of work in the field of firearms control through specialized side events, seminars and think-tank meetings, and engagement with civil society organizations, among other activities.

14. On the margins of the sixtieth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna from 13 to 17 March 2017, the Global Programme on Firearms and the CRIMJUST project, funded by the European Union and implemented by UNODC in partnership with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and Transparency International, held a side event on the topic "Links between illicit drug

[2] Enabled by a financial contribution from the Government of France, experts from the following countries attended the meeting: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger and Togo.

trafficking and trafficking in illicit firearms: towards an integrated approach", at which UNODC and Member States shared their experiences. During the event, experts from Brazil, Mexico and Nigeria provided concrete examples of the interconnectedness of illicit flows of drugs and firearms.[3]

15. The Global Programme on Firearms organized two side events on the margins of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, held in Vienna from 22 to 26 May 2017. The first was organized in cooperation with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, RAND Europe and the Global Programme on Cybercrime and was entitled "Web-based arms trafficking: investigating the illegal trade of firearms through the hidden web". The event served as a platform to share research on trafficking in firearms on the deep web and as an opportunity for representatives of the European Police Office (Europol) to elaborate on their experience in the matter. UNODC provided an analysis of the continued usefulness and applicability of the Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol to cases of trafficking in firearms on the deep web. The second side event, organized in cooperation with the European Commission and the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch, was entitled "From data to action: using firearms data to tailor policies, enhance operational capacities and foster international cooperation to combat firearms trafficking". At the event, representatives of the Government of Panama, the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats and UNODC focused on practical examples of using firearms data for monitoring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

16. A representative of UNODC also participated as a panellist in the meeting of the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures organized by the Government of Germany and the Office for Disarmament Affairs on the margins of the seventy-second session of the First Committee. The meeting addressed the issue of curbing arms flows from a field perspective: the case of Africa.

17. UNODC also participated in an informal expert meeting organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on exploring synergies in reporting under multilateral conventional arms treaties and instruments, held in Geneva on 6 December 2017. During the meeting, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms presented the Programme's new data collection tool on firearms, and briefed participants about current efforts to update its information-gathering tools in support of the Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol.

18. Moreover, representatives of UNODC participated in a meeting organized by Wilton Park on implementing target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals: increasing detection and reporting of illicit small arms and light weapons: common challenges and shared solutions, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 to 28 February 2018. UNODC also contributed to a workshop organized by the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and the Bonn International Centre for Conversion on lessons learned from arms control efforts in fragile and post-conflict contexts, held in Berlin on 26 and 27 February 2018. The workshop focused on experiences with cross-border law enforcement cooperation in the fight against trafficking and experiences with community-based, civilian disarmament efforts.

19. With a view to improving the sharing of information with Member States, UNODC organized an information briefing for Member States on the achievements and priorities of the Global Programme on Firearms in Vienna on 23 January 2018. The event was attended by more than 70 government representatives from 55 Member States.

[3] Even though this activity took place prior to the indicated reporting period, it has been included in the present background paper, as it was not reflected in the previous paper on the work of UNODC in support of the Working Group on Firearms (CTOC/COP/WG.6/2017/3).

20. As a means to reach a wider, more diverse audience, the Global Programme on Firearms, with support from the Advocacy Section of UNODC, reviewed and updated its communication strategy to include a more diversified range of tools and approaches, such as the use of the Internet and social media. In 2017, more than 21,400 people visited the Global Programme's web page.

Priority areas for further action

21. UNODC will continue to organize activities and events aimed at increasing stakeholders' knowledge and awareness of firearms and related issues and the Office's work in that regard.

3. Status of adherence to the Firearms Protocol

22. In September 2017, Fiji acceded to the Firearms Protocol, bringing the total number of parties to 115.

Figure II
Ratification rate of the Firearms Protocol, by year (status as at 1 January 2018)

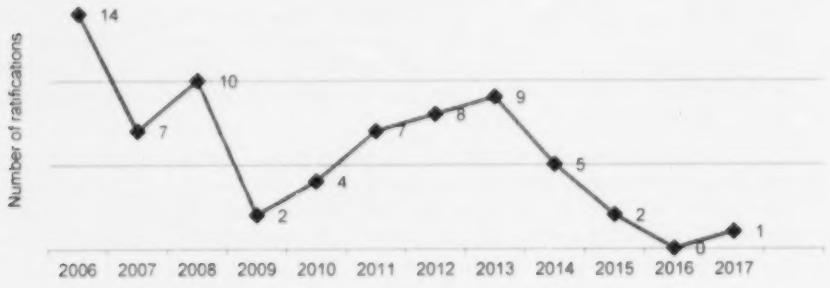
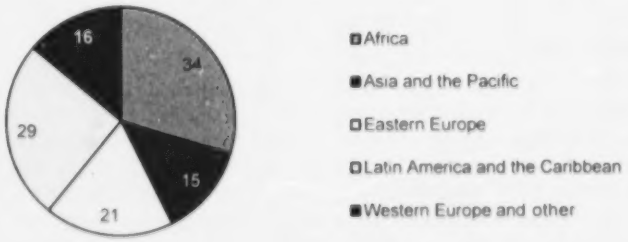


Figure III
Number of States parties that have ratified the Firearms Protocol, by region (status as of January 2018)



23. During the reporting period, UNODC provided legislative advice to Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chad, Germany, Japan, the Niger and Sri Lanka to support their possible accession to and ratification of the Firearms Protocol. As a result, several countries informed UNODC that they were in the process of completing their internal accession procedure.

Priority areas for further action

24. In order to continue promoting knowledge of and adherence to the Firearms Protocol, UNODC will seek to continue raising awareness of the Protocol among non-parties and regions with low ratification rates through, inter alia, regional and national pre-ratification support workshops, subject to the availability of funds for that purpose.

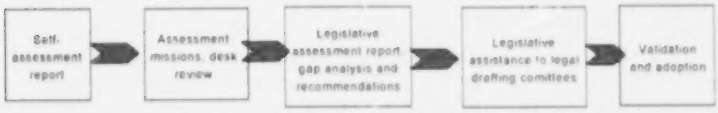
4. Legislative assistance

25. Supporting the enhancement of national legal frameworks on firearms is a long-term engagement strategy aimed at introducing long-lasting and sustainable changes in the beneficiary countries, and is at the core of the Office's mandate in relation to firearms.

26. The methodology of the Global Programme on Firearms for supporting legislative reform efforts provides for a flexible and progressively engaging and participatory process that involves diverse national and regional stakeholders. The process starts with a legislative assessment that includes, where possible, a national self-assessment report and then builds on the findings of country visits, interviews and desk reviews and analyses conducted by UNODC experts, resulting in tailor-made support, where needed.

27. Legislative assessment reports developed by UNODC legal experts provide in-depth analyses of gaps as well as concrete recommendations for improvement. The Global Programme works with national drafting committees with a broad multidisciplinary composition to develop new laws; specialized reference material and guidance tools such as issue papers, model legislation, legislative guides, standardized templates and assessment tools further support such efforts. The Global Programme also actively supports regional harmonization efforts and synergies among different instruments.

Figure IV
The legislative development process of the Global Programme on Firearms


Self-assessment report
Assessment missions, desk review
Legislative assessment report, gap analysis and recommendations
Legislative assistance to legal drafting comittees
Validation and adoption

28. In line with recommendations 6 and 18 emanating from the previous meeting of the Working Group, UNODC continued to provide Member States with tailor-made, specialized legislative assistance to help develop effective national legislation in line with the Firearms Protocol, taking into account synergies with other international, regional and subregional instruments. During the reporting period, the Global Programme on Firearms continued to assist and advise Burkina Faso and Chad in revising and amending national firearms legislation by convening legal drafting workshops, undertaking legislative gap analyses and facilitating the preparation of draft bills on firearms. UNODC organized, in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, a follow-up legislative drafting workshop in Ouagadougou from 28 to 30 March 2017. During the workshop, national authorities revised and validated the previous draft legislation that had been jointly developed with the Global Programme. In December 2017, authorities in Burkina Faso shared their new draft with UNODC for final comments, in view of its official submission to the Parliament of Burkina Faso in spring 2018. Another workshop was held in N'Djamena from 7 to 9 November 2017 that was also aimed at concluding the review and drafting work initiated in the previous year with national authorities.

29. As part of the European Union action plan against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in a series of high-level policy dialogue meetings between the European Union Commission and third countries from the Middle East and North Africa Region (in Tunisia in July 2017 and in Jordan and Lebanon in December 2017). The meetings held in Tunisia and Lebanon focused on legislation related to firearms control and possession. UNODC experts participated together with representatives from the European Union Commission, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

30. UNODC organized a regional legislative harmonization workshop on the transposition of the Firearms Protocol, held in Tunis from 11 to 13 July 2017. The meeting was attended by 20 officials from Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, as well

as by national experts from the Netherlands and Spain. Prior to the workshop, an assessment and comparative analysis of firearms legislation in the subregion was prepared by UNODC and presented to participants.

31. UNODC also provided tailored legislative advice to national authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia on the implementation of the import marking requirements under the Firearms Protocol. As a result, both countries integrated the requirements in their draft bills on firearms, which were to be presented to their respective parliaments in 2018.

32. In addition, UNODC supported authorities of Mauritania in translating its new draft law on firearms, which had been previously developed with the support of UNODC, from French to Arabic.

Priority areas for further action

33. Supporting legislative review and reform processes constitutes the first pillar of the Global Programme's integrated approach and will continue to be a core activity of the Programme. UNODC also intends to strengthen its efforts to advocate for the adoption of draft legislation of firearms in countries where such draft legislation is already available.

B. Development of tools

34. UNODC has continued to update and develop specialized tools and publications aimed at providing practical guidance and support and delivering high-quality technical assistance to Member States.

35. Several legislative tools developed by the Global Programme on Firearms in previous years continue to be relevant and useful for practitioners and are being used in the delivery of legislative and technical assistance. By way of example, in 2017, the UNODC Model Law on Firearms, developed in 2010 and updated in 2013, was downloaded almost 4,000 times from the UNODC website. During the same period, the Digest of Organized Crime Cases, developed in 2012 by the Global Programme, was downloaded more than 23,700 times.

36. As part of its legislative assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the Global Programme on Firearms conducted a comparative study on the implementation of import marking requirements for firearms and ammunition and their transposition into national legislation in European and Balkan countries. The findings of this study were translated into local languages and shared with national authorities, and will be published and disseminated as an issue paper in the coming months.

37. The Comprehensive Firearms Training Curriculum continues to be used for capacity-building activities and is being regularly reviewed and updated. The curriculum currently comprises 19 modules containing practical information on the implementation of national controls to prevent and combat trafficking in firearms, the identification of trafficking in firearms, as well as operational practices on how to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in firearms. In 2017, parts of the curriculum were translated into French and disseminated at training activities. A new module on detection of firearms at land border crossings was developed and piloted-tested, and additional modules on gender mainstreaming and other cross-cutting themes are in the process of being developed.

38. In the context of the UNODC Education for Justice initiative, the Global Programme on Firearms initiated the development of teaching modules to encourage and guide tertiary-level educators in addressing the topic of illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, and related topics. It is planned that the modules will be validated by educators and thematic experts in three regional meetings, to be held in Asia, Latin America and Vienna (for Africa, Europe and the Russian Federation) between April and May 2018, and pilot-tested and disseminated in the course of 2018.

39. In line with recommendation 21 emanating from the previous meeting of the Working Group, UNODC initiated the collection and analysis of relevant cases and good practices to investigate and prosecute cases of trafficking in firearms, including cases linked to terrorism and organized crime. Several cases are collected in the course of regional meetings and training activities, thus allowing for a direct exchange with practitioners on lessons learned and setbacks encountered in the conduct of the respective investigations. It is foreseen that the collected information will be published in a digest of illicit firearms cases, which will compile and analyse practical experiences, including concrete legal techniques, common protocols and operational norms in combating those crimes, as well as new and emerging forms of criminality.

40. UNODC also collaborated with RAND Europe on their empirical research on trafficking in firearms via the darknet, drafting an annex chapter to the RAND Europe study on the international legal framework and its ability to respond to this threat. The study and the annex chapter were published in July 2017 and can be downloaded from the UNODC website.[4]

41. Pursuant to its mandate to continue its efforts to improve the methodology of the *UNODC Study on Firearms 2015*, in accordance with Conference resolution 8/3, UNODC has reviewed its data collection methodology and updated its questionnaire on illicit trafficking in firearms in consultation and collaboration with Member States as well as weapons and statistical experts (further information on the Firearms Study is contained in section F below).

Priority areas for further action

42. UNODC is seeking funds to continue its effort to collect cases and good practices in investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in firearms and to publish them in a digest of illicit firearms cases. UNODC is also seeking funds for the development of technical tools and a series of issue papers to address legislative and operational responses to new and emerging threats linked to firearms, such as trafficking via the darknet, 3-D printing, deactivation standards, synergies between legislative frameworks on trafficking in firearms and other serious crimes, and to translate and disseminate relevant tools into all six official United Nations languages.

C. Technical support and capacity-building for implementation of preventive control measures under the Protocol

43. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to provide technical support to Member States in the implementation of preventive and security measures under the Firearms Protocol, in particular for marking and record-keeping, the storage of seized and confiscated firearms and ammunition, as well as the collection and disposal of illicit firearms.

1. Marking and record-keeping of firearms

44. In line with recommendation 10 emanating from the previous meeting of the Working Group, UNODC has continued to provide technical assistance in the area of marking and record-keeping through technical support and specialized capacity-building efforts.

45. In the Western Balkans, UNODC organized workshops in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1 December 2017) and Serbia (14 December 2017) to support those countries' respective national processes of developing and implementing operating procedures for marking imported firearms. During the workshops, UNODC shared and discussed the findings of the comparative study on the implementation of import marking requirements for firearms and ammunition described above. Prior to those

[4] The study and the UNODC annex chapter are available on the UNODC firearms web page (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/firearms-protocol/news/unodc-analyses-the-policy-implications-of-illicit-firearms-trafficking-on-the-dark-web.html).

workshops, in October 2017, UNODC organized a study visit to Vienna for both countries, during which the delegations visited the Vienna proof house and received information and practical demonstrations on the exercise of marking and the organization of the marking process, including the responsibilities of the parties involved, cooperation with industry and the resources and organizational structures required to implement the marking of firearms, among others.

46. In West Africa and the Sahel region, UNODC continued providing support to national authorities in the field of marking and registration of weapons, with a view to developing sustainable and stable structures to ensure continued efforts in marking and record-keeping. By the end of 2017, more than 48,000 firearms had been marked in Burkina Faso, Mali, Togo and the Niger. Periodic refresher training courses and technical follow-up support is still required in order to ensure full national ownership and sustained efforts. To that end, UNODC continued to work closely with the Government of Mali to support the registration in central databases of more than 33,000 firearms in 2017. In December 2017, UNODC organized a refresher capacity-building session on the use of registries in Mali.

47. The Global Programme on Firearms continued to work with the Information and Technology Service of UNODC on the development of a comprehensive record-keeping system on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. The development of such a registry is a response to requests made by several countries that lack comprehensive and digitalized record-keeping systems, or that require additional support for the recording of seized, found and surrendered firearms. On the basis of a technical concept note developed by the Global Programme, the UNODC Information and Technology Service is to design and develop the software, which is to be operationalized first in Panama as part of that country's national project on firearms, which started in June 2017; subject to additional funding, it is then to be provided to other requesting countries and customized to their specific needs.

Priority areas for further action

48. Support for marking and record-keeping of firearms will remain a priority for most countries, requiring technical and financial support, equipment and training on the marking and recording of firearms, including those that are seized, collected and recovered. The development of a comprehensive record-keeping system and its customization, adaptation and implementation in other interested countries remains a high priority and will require additional funding. UNODC is also working towards ensuring that marking and registration exercises are implemented in parallel with the operationalization of tracing mechanisms.

2. Physical security and stockpile management

49. The proper storage and management of firearms poses a particular challenge for many countries that face thefts and leakages from their storage facilities, as well as in relation to securing the chain of custody that is required to produce valid evidence in court. Effective and secure management and storage of seized firearms is a major priority for many countries, and goes hand in hand with effective and comprehensive record-keeping systems.

50. UNODC has continued to support selected countries in enhancing the security of storage facilities for seized firearms in order to ensure good practices in physical security and stockpile management. In that regard, work on the construction and refurbishment of transitional firearms storage sites for seized firearms was completed in Senegal, and continues in Burkina Faso and the Niger.

Priority areas for further action

51. Support provided by the Global Programme on Firearms in relation to the physical security of stocks will continue to focus primarily on seized and/or confiscated firearms.

3. Collection, management and disposal of firearms

52. Arms collection campaigns form a part of national efforts to reduce the uncontrolled proliferation of firearms and reduce the risk of their theft and diversion into illicit markets.

53. During the reporting period, UNODC worked closely with national authorities and civil society organizations from Burkina Faso, the Niger and Senegal in the development of awareness-raising and campaigns to collect illicit firearms, with gender-sensitive messages tailored to specific population groups, such as young men, women and youth. Voluntary arms-surrender campaigns were launched in all three Member States between February and March 2018. Follow-up support will focus on the identification, recording and destruction of illicit firearms as well as on the procurement of relevant equipment and training on its use.

54. In Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Panama, part of the integrated assistance package agreed with the respective Governments includes the record-keeping system, as well as the design, development and implementation of a national arms surrender campaign and a simultaneous arms registration campaign, with related capacity-building, awareness-raising and technical support, to be rolled out in the course of 2018.

Priority areas for further action

55. Several Member States face the challenge of diversion of weapons from national stocks and armouries. Supporting Member States in ensuring the availability of adequate equipment, as well as training on stockpile management and the destruction of illicit firearms in line with international standards and good practices remains a priority of UNODC.

D. Strengthening criminal justice responses to firearms-related criminality

56. Strengthening criminal justice responses to trafficking in firearms and its links to organized crime and other crimes, including terrorist activities, constitutes one of the five pillars of the Office's work on firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. Detecting illicit trafficking movements, dismantling the criminal networks or groups involved in trafficking in firearms or other serious crimes, and bringing the perpetrators to justice are essential preconditions for reducing illicit arms flows and combating all forms of organized crime, as expressed in target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In practice, however, criminal investigations of firearms trafficking offences are rare and difficult to carry out.

57. During the reporting period, UNODC continued to deliver specialized training and capacity-building courses on the investigation and prosecution of cases of trafficking in firearms and its links to organized crime and related matters. From 27 to 31 March 2017, the Global Programme on Firearms delivered a course to 33 practitioners from the areas of law enforcement, prosecution and customs and from the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons of Burkina Faso. Another course was delivered in Algiers from 27 to 30 November 2017 for more than 60 officials from Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. The training sessions were tailored to meet national needs and addressed, inter alia, proactive investigation techniques, intelligence and forensics, and the latest trends in and use of new technologies in firearms manufacturing and trafficking. Participants enriched their skills and knowledge about investigative methods and were able to discuss with practitioners from other Member States practices that are best-suited to a successful criminal justice approach.

58. Representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms participated in a conference organized within the framework of "LE TrainNet" initiative of the UNODC programme Building Effective Networks against Transnational Organized Crime and

hosted by the National Commission of Security, the Federal Police (in its capacity as President of the American Police Community) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, held in Mexico City from 30 August to 1 September. The conference brought together 200 law enforcement officers and training experts from more than 40 countries and organizations. The fifth session of the conference was dedicated to training initiatives focused on monitoring, criminalization and investigation of firearms trafficking.

59. UNODC, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the World Customs Organization and the United Kingdom Border Force Skills Academy, trained 20 customs officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the detection of trafficking in firearms at land border-crossing points. The training course was held in Sarajevo from 28 to 30 November 2017 and addressed the international and national legal framework on firearms, investigation of trafficking in firearms, procedures for domestic and international tracing, marking and record-keeping, risk assessment, and profiling of vehicles and passengers. A practical exercise on detecting firearms took place at the premises of the national Customs Administration, where the participants used a training vehicle to gain hands-on experience on locating possible concealments of illicit firearms.

60. In addition, UNODC joined INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization in conceptualizing and implementing the different phases of a simultaneous law enforcement operation named TRIGGER III in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Nigeria from 20 November to 1 December 2017, during which 130 firearms, including 49 Kalashnikov-type weapons and several rounds of ammunition, were seized by local authorities. The operation also led to the initiation of 50 tracing requests. This represents an encouraging improvement with respect to previous operations. UNODC placed an emphasis on promoting a coherent criminal justice response and further investigation of identified cases of trafficking in firearms, and supported the participation of prosecutors of the participating Member States in the operation. Prior to the operation, a planning workshop with the organizers and partner countries was held in Algiers in September 2017, and a pre-operation workshop to further define the national operational plans for participating countries was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in October 2017. UNODC is also supporting a similar police operation in Member States of the Middle East and North Africa, for which a first preparatory meeting was held in Casablanca, Morocco, from 12 to 15 February 2018.

61. In the same vein, UNODC participated in and contributed to the Europol Joint Action Day Calibre, a police operation against trafficking in firearms in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The operation resulted in the seizure of 136 firearms, more than 7,000 rounds of ammunition and a wide range of other illicit goods and contraband.

62. In addition, UNODC and the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held a training session in Belgrade from 19 to 20 December 2017 on the identification and tracing of firearms and ammunition for 17 police officers from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. The objective of the training session was to enhance the knowledge and skills of front-line responders to identify trafficked firearms, collect and record relevant data and successfully participate in international information exchange.

Priority areas for further action

63. Training and capacity-building remain priorities for many requesting countries. UNODC intends to further reinforce this component of the Global Programme on Firearms, including by expanding the scope of specialized training programmes to better respond to such requests. UNODC further plans to continue its support to practical police operations by promoting greater cooperation with the judiciary and

ensuring a coherent criminal justice response to cases of trafficking in firearms. In the same vein, UNODC plans to strengthen its support for the creation and operationalization of specialized firearms hubs within the law enforcement system.

E. Promoting international cooperation and information exchange

64. International cooperation in criminal matters is a fundamental part of the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms, including the regular sharing of information and good practices among practitioners, which is explicitly encouraged by the Protocol in its article 12. In its resolution 8/3, the Conference requested UNODC to continue to promote and encourage international cooperation in criminal matters, pursuant to the Convention, with the aim of investigating and prosecuting the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, including when related to terrorism and to other crimes, through regional and cross-regional workshops, including for countries that are on relevant trafficking routes.

65. Pursuant to this mandate and in line with recommendation 20 emanating from the fifth meeting of the Working Group, the Global Programme on Firearms actively promotes international law enforcement and judicial cooperation, as well as the exchange of information and best practices at the theoretical level through training and capacity-building activities, and at the practical and operational levels through regular meetings and exchanges among practitioners and by supporting international and regional police forces.

66. UNODC has promoted the creation of an informal group of firearms control and criminal justice practitioners, referred to as the "Community of Practitioners". The initiative is aimed at promoting better interactions among the different communities and fostering regional and interregional cooperation to counter trafficking in firearms and its links to other forms of organized crime and serious crimes, including terrorism, through the regular exchange of information, case-based experiences and good practices among criminal justice, law enforcement and firearms control practitioners. Meetings of the Community of Practitioners were held in Algiers from 5 to 7 December 2017, and in Belgrade on 12 and 13 December 2017, with more than 60 participants from Algeria, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania and the Niger, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The meetings also complement the development of the digest of illicit firearms cases.

Priority areas for further action

67. UNODC will continue to promote and establish the Community of Practitioners to support international cooperation efforts and encourage the regular exchange of good practices and lessons learned in the fight against illicit trafficking in firearms and its links to other forms of organized crime and serious crimes.

F. Mapping and monitoring illicit firearms flows

68. The fifth pillar of the approach of the Global Programme on Firearms focuses on evidence-based research and analysis, and aims at enhancing the intelligence picture and the overall understanding of trafficking in firearms and its criminal context.

69. UNODC began updating the methodology used for the Firearms Study in 2016, pursuant to the mandate contained in Conference resolution 8/3, to continue to collect and analyse quantitative and qualitative information and suitably disaggregated data on trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, taking into account the 2015 Firearms Study and target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to disseminate its findings on a regular basis, and to that end, to revise and enhance its methodology in cooperation with relevant organizations. Target 16.4 has served to highlight the relevance of the UNODC Firearms Study and contributed to shaping the Office's mandate to continue to collect and analyse data on firearms. The proposed

indicator for this target (16.4.2, the proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms, whose illicit origin/context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments) is complementary to the Study, and further supports the Office's work; UNODC and the Office for Disarmament Affairs were designated as co-custodians of indicator 16.4.2.

70. Following an informal expert group meeting in September 2016 and a round of informal consultations with selected firearms and statistical experts in March 2017, the Global Programme on Firearms, in cooperation with the UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch, launched a pilot test exercise of the revised Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire. To ensure a geographical balance and take into account the complexity and structure of the existing national data collection systems, 39 Member States and one intergovernmental organization were invited to participate in the exercise. A total of 12 responses were received,[5] containing data and metadata, as well as feedback on the feasibility and comprehensibility of the revised Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire. Additionally, feedback received during three regional meetings on firearms data collection and analysis was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. It is estimated that the official data collection exercise will be launched in April 2018.

71. The revised Illicit Arms Flows Questionnaire contains quantitative and qualitative questions on the amount, type, condition, geographical and criminal context, tracing, trafficking routes, trends and modalities of seized firearms. The questionnaire also addresses, where necessary, found and surrendered firearms for purposes of reporting progress made against target indicator 16.4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, where deemed useful for the identification and monitoring of illicit arms flows, the questionnaire seeks information on seized parts and components and ammunition.

72. Furthermore, with a view to enhancing national and international data collection and analysis efforts to monitor illicit firearms trafficking flows and to promote more effective international cooperation and information exchange among practitioners, UNODC organized a series of regional meetings, with the participation of 54 Member States. The first, for African Member States,[6] was held in Addis Ababa on 28 and 29 September 2017; the second, for Latin America,[7] in Panama City on 29 and 30 November 2017; and the third, for European countries,[8] in Brussels on 25 January 2018. In total, more than 120 participants from 26 African, 14 Latin American and 15 European Member States, as well as concerned regional and non-governmental organizations, participated in and contributed to the meetings, providing comments and feedback on the pilot questionnaire and engaging in practical exercises on completing it.

73. The regional meetings benefited from expert interventions from various non-governmental organizations and research and statistical institutes, such as Conflict Armament Research, the Institute for Security Studies and the Small Arms Survey at the regional meeting in Africa, the joint Mexico-UNODC Centre of Excellence for Crime Statistics on Governance, Victims of Crime, Public Security and Justice at the regional meeting in Latin America, and Eurostat and Frontex at the European regional

[5] UNODC received feedback during the pilot test exercise from Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Ghana, Iraq, Mexico, Nigeria, Romania, the United Kingdom, Zambia and the European Union.

[6] The following Member States participated in and contributed to the regional meeting for Africa: Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

[7] The following Member States participated in and contributed to the regional meeting for Latin America: Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

[8] The following Member States participated in and contributed to the regional meeting for Europe: Croatia, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

meeting. At least three more regional meetings are planned for 2018, for Southern and Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and Asia.

IV. Coordination with other relevant international and regional organizations

A. Cooperation within the United Nations

74. UNODC has continued to contribute to the work of the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism,[9] the system-wide coordination platform established by the Secretary-General to promote the exchange of information and coordination of ongoing initiatives and to support efforts to "deliver as one" on the issue of small arms. UNODC also continues to coordinate activities and cooperate with relevant United Nations agencies and offices, such as the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), UNDP, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

75. On 17 May 2017, UNODC contributed to an open briefing for Member States on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons, organized by CTED and held in New York, to provide an overview on the various initiatives being undertaken by the United Nations in that regard. Representatives of UNODC presented the Office's integrated approach to tackling existing challenges in preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in firearms, including cases linked to other forms of organized crime and terrorism.

76. Representatives of UNODC actively participated in a seminar for member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Timor-Leste on illicit trafficking in and diversion of small arms and light weapons organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, held in Phnom Penh on 19 and 20 December 2017. UNODC representatives presented the Office's data collection initiative for monitoring and measuring the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and also provided information on the Office's work in support of Member States' efforts to counter illicit firearms manufacturing and trafficking.

77. In addition, UNODC contributed to a training session on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Office for Disarmament Affairs for 50 young female professionals and held in Vienna from 12 to 16 February 2018, and elaborated on the Office's approach to countering trafficking in firearms and its links to the Sustainable Development Goals.

B. Cooperation with other international and regional organizations

78. In order to enhance understanding of the Firearms Protocol and its links to other instruments, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty, UNODC participated in a high-level panel discussion organized by the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations in Vienna, entitled "Contributions to controlling transfers of conventional arms".

79. On 4 October 2017, UNODC took part in the second meeting of the African Union-Germany Coordination Platform, held in Addis Ababa, which brought together representatives of the African Union, African subregional organizations, United Nations agencies and other implementing agencies. The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the African Union initiative on silencing the guns — continental plan of action

[9] The United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms Mechanism comprises 23 United Nations entities that coordinate and cooperate within the framework of their respective mandates.

on the control of illicit small arms and light weapons. UNODC provided substantive advice on activities that could be carried out in support of the plan and to which it could contribute, particularly in relation to the need to strengthen the criminal justice response as a means to improve the fight against trafficking in illicit firearms.

80. Representatives of UNODC provided the Office's perspective on the state of research on illicit arms flows in Africa during a meeting organized for the African Regional Economic Communities by the African Union and the non-governmental organization Small Arms Survey, held in Addis Ababa on 13 and 14 June 2017.

81. UNODC has maintained regular contact with the European Union to address the need to strengthen legislative frameworks on firearms, enhance national and international data collection and analysis of illicit trafficking flows, and reinforce the criminal justice response to detect and prosecute trafficking in illicit firearms and its links to organized crime and terrorism. In that regard, UNODC contributed to the aforementioned legislative workshops organized by the European Union and held in Jordan (November 2017) and Lebanon (December 2017), and supported a training session organized by the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training held in Czechia (September 2017), among other activities. Moreover, operational cooperation activities with Europol, the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats and INTERPOL have continued and intensified, and will be further expanded in 2018.

82. Additionally, UNODC ensured cooperation with other regional organizations mandated to work on firearms issues, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, representatives of which participated in the regional meeting on data collection for Africa, and the Arab Maghreb Union, representatives of which participated in a regional legislative workshop for Maghreb countries and Libya.

C. Cooperation with civil society and the private sector

83. Participation and cooperation with civil society is a cross-cutting element of the Global Programme on Firearms. UNODC has actively engaged civil society organizations at various levels, including by supporting the development of legislation, providing training activities, developing a training course on civil society participation and oversight, and collaborating in the implementation of advocacy materials.

84. In the context of the Education for Justice initiative, representatives of the Global Programme on Firearms once again took active part in The Hague International Model United Nations, organized by the Qatar Foundation and held in Doha on 25 January 2018. With the goal of sensitizing young students to the issue of trafficking in firearms and the international response to the threat posed by it, the representatives of the Global Programme introduced the Office's approach to countering trafficking in firearms and the links to target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals. The conference brought together more than 1,300 students from across the globe.

85. UNODC participated in and contributed to meetings and seminars organized by, inter alia, the Centre for the Reduction of Firearms Crime, Trafficking and Terrorism of the University of Northampton, United Kingdom (February 2018), the Observatory on Organized Crime of the University of Milan (February 2018), and in several meetings organized by the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as part of its projects funded by the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, held respectively in Panama City (May 2017), Dakar (June 2017) and Johannesburg, South Africa (February 2018).

86. UNODC remains engaged with key organizations working on the issue of illicit trafficking in firearms, such as Conflict Armament Research, RAND Europe, the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, the Bonn International Center for Conversion, the Institute for Security Studies, the Mines Advisory Group, West African Action Network

on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Small Arms Survey and the Joint Research Centre on Transnational Crime (Transcrime).

Priority areas for further action

87. The Global Programme on Firearms will continue to cooperate with and involve civil society organizations and the private sector in its activities, both in the implementation of awareness-raising activities and in addressing cross-cutting themes, in particular those related to gender and human rights.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

88. The illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, and their links to organized crime, terrorism and other serious crimes, remains a pressing problem in many countries and regions.

89. The Organized Crime Convention and its Firearms Protocol establish a robust legal framework at the international level to combat and address the illicit trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition. This framework is further reinforced through other legal instruments and policy frameworks adopted at the global and regional levels.

90. The Global Programme on Firearms has continued to promote the ratification of the Firearms Protocol and to assist Member States in its implementation, building on five major pillars. Sustainable and predictable funds are required to ensure the continuation of the Global Programme's activities and to enable it to respond to technical assistance requests from different countries and regions.

91. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and monitoring progress made towards their achievement are two equally important objectives. The UNODC mapping and monitoring initiative is a suitable tool to facilitate the global monitoring of indicator 16.4.2 of the Goals.

92. The Working Group may wish to discuss the effectiveness and sustainability of implemented control measures that contribute to the fight against trafficking in illicit firearms and related offences, including terrorism. The Working Group may further wish to discuss the linkages between the different kinds of measures that contribute to achieving target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the structure and effectiveness of existing national mechanisms and authorities that monitor progress towards the reduction of trafficking in illicit firearms. In addition, the Working Group may wish to discuss how practical measures under the Firearms Protocol can help prevent criminal and terrorists groups from acquiring firearms, also taking into account developments in other international forums, such as Security Council resolution 2370 (2017), on preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons.